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ABSTRACT

This document describes a project in which elementary school students explored the problems experienced by early pioneers and compared them to similar problems that will face future space pioneers. Comparing a past way of life to the present and future helps students examine and understand change in the physical, social, and cultural environment, and factors that precipitate change. In this project students: simulated early pioneering experiences, identified the impact of the environment on the early settler way of life, compared the self-sufficiency of settlers to human characteristics necessary for "future" societies, developed decision-making and problem-solving skills, and participated in daily writing activities related to the pioneer theme. Specific activities in this 6-week program included student use of the Interact simulation "Pioneers" and a full day experience in a one-room school where students dressed and learned as they would have in the 1880s. Another group of students did in-depth study of future environments both on the planet Earth and other planets. Students were given the opportunity to "uninvent" one modern-day invention and evaluate the repercussions of their actions. Student readings include "Little House in the Big Woods" by Laura Ingalls Wilder and "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint Exupery. Other activities are listed and evaluation criteria are presented. Materials include letters to parents and students explaining the program and a short biography of Laura Ingalls Wilder. A 7-item bibliography is provided. (GEA)

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WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
AS APPLIED IN AN ENRICHMENT CLASSROOM SETTING

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GRADES 2-6
ST. MARYS CITY SCHOOLS

DECEMBER 1, 1988

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WEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
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GOAL:

The goal of this project was to compare problems experienced by early pioneers to similar problems of future space pioneers. Studying the everyday lives of the settlers provides an opportunity to explore a society from its inception, and to examine the needs of members of that society for food, shelter, and culture. Comparing a past way of life to the present and the future helps students examine and understand change in the physical, social, and cultural environment, and factors that precipitate change.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

The students will:

1) participate in a simulation of early pioneering;
2) identify the impact of the environment on the early settler way of life;
3) compare the self-sufficiency in the settler way of life to human characteristics necessary for "future" societies;
4) develop decision making and problem solving skills;
5) participate in daily writing activities related to the pioneer theme.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES:

Each student was given a packet from the Interact simulation *Pioneers*. Students were to simulate a journey of early 1800's pioneers on a wagon train enroute to the Oregon Territory. As members of the wagon train, students were asked to make major decisions concerning travel, and write about various aspects of the decision making process. In addition, students kept a diary to represent time intervals of their simulated journey. They also described experiences and wrote their expectations for the journey.

Students used a problem solving approach to determine possible actions dealing with particular trail decisions. They were to list in written chart form possible actions, and analyze outcomes for each possible action.

Research projects were also an integral part of this project. Students were advised to take notes from two reference materials for their topic. Research projects were presented to the class for evaluation.

Students read Laura Ingalls Wilder's book, *Little House in the Big Woods*, and completed various purpose for reading questions for each chapter. They visited Johnny Appleseed Park and were involved in hands-on experiences dealing with pioneer tools. Later in the project, they traveled to Collins School in Xenia, Ohio where they participated in an all day, one room school simulation. Students wrote their reaction to these trips, and wrote thank you letters to those who had organized the events.

Other related activities:

- •writing about a survival camping adventure;
- •homestead for sale project: design ads for posting, figure selling price, profit, etc.;
- •compare emigration of people to migration of birds and changes of habitat among animals for various reasons and purposes;
- •write the ways our lives are affected by the environment;
- •word study: i.e. pioneer is used in the context of starting something new. Research pioneers on other scientific areas.
- •compare and contrast homes of Laura Ingalls with futuristic homes;
- •construct a mobile to illustrate aspects of a early settler homestead;
- •health practices: compare health practices of early settlements with those on a future colony;

- write about the preservation and preparation of food in past and future settlements;
- make a model of a Conestoga wagon and write the directions for its construction;
- write a pioneer ballad and sing it to familiar tune;
- use the computer simulation *Oregon Trail*.

While one group of students was involved primarily in early pioneering, another group did indepth study of the futuristic aspect of colonization. Their reading was based on the book *The Little Prince* written by Antoine de Saint Exupéry. These students were involved in close study of various aspects of future environments both on the planet Earth and other planets.

They selected future happenings or trends and created "thought webs" to show all of the possible effects of their topics. Topics included banning cars for intra-city travel, increased leisure time, depletion of fossil fuels, pollution, developing space colonies, limiting the number of children in over populated countries, and future education.

Students considered alternatives to 20th century housing and designed a city of the future. Along with this project, they wrote one episode of a television program that typified living in this situation, and the adjustments that all members of an extended family must make.

These students also participated in an "imagine that" experiment where they were given the power to uninvent one modern-day invention. They described what the world would be like if they really could get rid of the machine of their choice. They wrote about both the good things and the problems created by their uninvention. They were also considered how the decision to uninvent this machine would affect other people and their lives.

Students wrote want ads for jobs of the future and illustrated the ads. Also, they wrote help wanted columns for newspapers of the future. Finally, each student wrote a cinquain about the future.

EVALUATION:

•Students will list similarities and differences of early pioneers to future pioneers.

Students will apply knowledge about early pioneers to futuristic societies.

Students will express in written form an understanding of self-sufficiency in the early way of life.

Students will design and organize a journal of pioneer events.

Students will apply problem solving techniques given particular situations.

This unit was completed in six weeks, but could be extended as an ongoing project.

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Dear Enrichment Students,

Welcome to our new class! I am excited about working with you this year, and hope that you are looking forward to some challenging and fun times together. I am already looking forward to some planned field trips that I will be sharing with you and your family later.

Enclosed in this packet, is your first assignment which may be completed in your classroom (after other responsibilities are taken care of and with permission from your classroom teacher), or taken home to work on at your leisure. Even though the questions deal specifically with the book Little House in the Big Woods, they are designed to make you think about pioneering and the early settlers in general, the topic we will be discussing in the next few weeks together.

You will notice too, some questions may have no right or wrong answer, and many questions could have more than one answer. Don't worry! These questions are designed to help you think about certain ideas and think in creative ways. Please don't just fill-in the blank with a single response. Think about your answers and be able to justify your reasons for answering in that way in class. Also, be responsible for bringing this packet to enrichment with you each time we meet.

For this first assignment, use these sheets as a study guide both before and after reading. Reading the questions before you read the chapters will help you organize your thoughts by pinpointing what information you are looking for. Pay particular attention to the vocabulary. Since this story took place many years ago, people used words which may be unfamiliar to you in 1988. If there are words which are unfamiliar, please use a dictionary to make sure that the word can become a part of you.

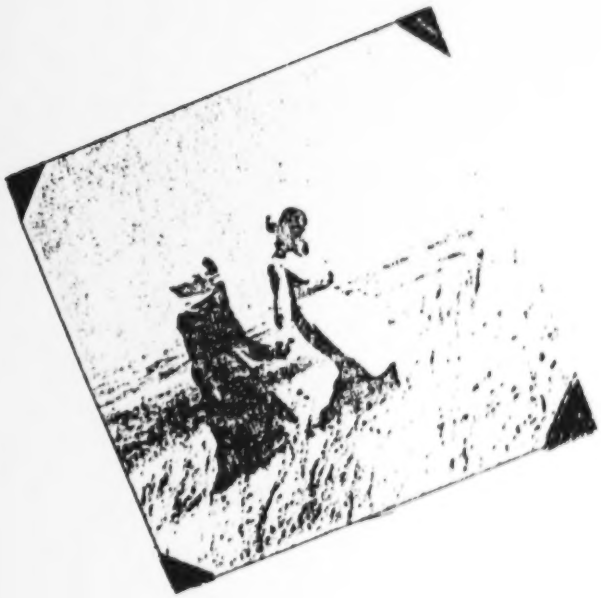
In addition to the question guide, you will find a list of activities at the end of the packet. I would like for you to choose one of these activities to share with us in enrichment. There are many possibilities and ways of sharing information besides paper and pencil. Perhaps you can think of another project to share the same information. Ask me about your ideas if you have questions.

Most of all have fun learning about the adventures of Laura Ingalls and her family. Try to compare her life to yours. We'll be discussing those similarities and differences in class.

If you or your parents have a question concerning this first assignment, please feel free to contact me. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Mielke



LAURA INGALLS WILDER

Laura Elizabeth Ingalls was born in Pepin, Wisconsin, on February 7, 1876 to Charles and Caroline Ingalls. "Pa" Ingalls had a pioneering spirit, and the family rarely stayed in one place for long. After leaving Pepin in 1868, they moved to Rothville, Missouri; Independence, Kansas; back to Pepin; on to Walnut Grove, Minnesota; Burr Oak, Iowa, and back to Walnut Grove. In 1879 they settled in De Smet, South Dakota.

Laura started teaching school in 1883, when she was 15. Two years later she married Almanzo Wilder, who was 28. They had a daughter, Rose, and a son, who died in infancy. In 1894, Laura, Almanzo, and Rose settled in Mansfield, Missouri at Rocky Ridge Farm.

Laura was 65 when she wrote her first book. Rose, an accomplished author, had persuaded her mother to write her memoirs. Laura's books describe in vivid detail her life as a pioneer. She tells of her close family ties, her adventures with her three sisters, and of course traveling across the vast prairie in a covered wagon. Her books paint a complete picture of the whole Ingalls family, including Pa, whose fiddle was never far from his side; and her older sister, Mary, who lost her eyesight at age 14.

Laura Ingalls Wilder died at Rocky Ridge Farm on February 10, 1957, three days after her 90th birthday. Almanzo had died in 1949 at age 92. Rose died in 1968.

Dear 5th Grade Enrichment Students and Parents,

On Monday, October 31st, 5th Grade Enrichment students will be experiencing a typical school day of the 1880's. We will be traveling to Collins School near Xenia, Ohio for what, I hope will be a very memorable day. During the day's activities, students spend time on the 3 R's (we'll be using McGuffy Readers), but they are also subtly reinforced in the traditional values so closely associated with that time and place: courtesy, neatness, economy, obedience, respect, conservation, and kindness.

Students are asked to "dress" for the occasion. Girls should wear skirts, not pants. Pinafores and bonnets, aprons, even long skirts of cotton, linen, or wool. Knits, especially hand-knitted, would be good. Shoes should be sensible. What would Grandma wear? Boys can tuck trousers into long socks to make "knickers." Again, sensible shoes . . . .clodhoppers. . . . or boots. Not tennis shoes. Plain colored or plaid flannel shirts and corduroy pants or overalls would be appropriate, not blue jeans. And, since this is before the days of kleenex, pin a ""noseblower" hankie on anyone with sniffles.

Food: please pack a lunch basket, bag, or bandana with a brown bread sandwich. It could have meat, egg salad, cheese, or peanut butter. Use apples and gingerbread instead of oranges and Toll House cookies. No bananas, or course! A cloth napkin and tin cup would be in keeping with our plans.

Sound like fun? These suggestions on dress and food come directly from the materials which I have received from Collins School. Certainly there is no need to buy costumes especially for this day, but the more authentic the costume and lunch, the more truly authentic our total one room school experience will be. I am also enclosing a list of possible foods for lunch. Choose as you like.

It will be necessary for our students to leave quite early for this trip. All students should be at the West Elementary School ready to leave by 7:30 A. M. Students should wear their costumes, and have lunch ready to take along. Two mothers and I will be transporting the students to Xenia. I am planning that we will return to the West building by 3:30 P.M. where students can be picked up.

If you have any questions, please call me at the West building. Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Nedra S. Mielke

Nedra S. Mielke
Enrichment Teacher

Mandy has permission to go on the trip to the Collins School in Xenia, Ohio on Monday, October 31st. I understand that students are to leave West School at 7:30 A.M. "dressed" for the pioneer schoolhouse day.

Diana Martin

Parent or Guardian

(Please return this permission paper to Mrs. Mielke no later than Friday, October 28th.)